

ST. NICHOLAS WEEKLY BULLETIN

AUGUST 3, 2014

THIS WEEK'S NEWS

THE DORMITION FAST in preparation for the Feast of the Falling-Asleep of the Theotokos began this past Friday, August 1st, and continues through Friday, August 15th. During this two-week period we will hold a number of special services. Please refer to the full schedule on the next page.

PITA BAKING, THIS Thursday, August 7th at 9:00 am. Will be working on inventory for the stART event. **Extra help is needed** and everyone's help is welcome. Questions? Please see Chris Toda. No experience necessary!

THANKS TO THE FOOD PANTRY VOLUNTEERS for working the Orthodox Food Center on behalf of our parish yesterday. Our regular commitment is the first Saturday of the month from 9am to noon. About 4 people are needed. If you can help in this worthwhile ministry, please speak with Nicole Peterson or Lisa Mielnicki. Our next Saturday is September 6th.

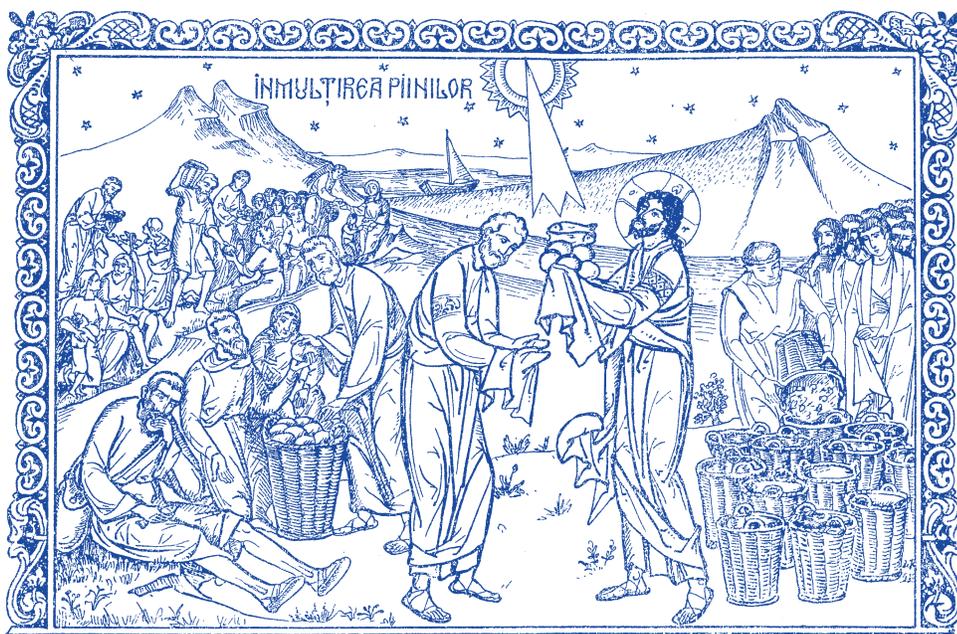
THE MUSTARD SEED MEAL originally scheduled for **Friday, August 15th** has been cancelled. The Mustard Seed staff has decided to close for a two-week vacation.

HOLY WATER BOTTLES need to be ordered and we're **looking for donations to cover the expense**. We nor-

GREETERS TEAM 4:
DEBORAH SEDARES & EVAN STAMOULIS

ALL ALTAR SERVERS INVITED

COFFEE HOUR ON VACATION



THE EIGHTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

EPISTLE: 1 CORINTHIANS 1:10-17 ☩ GOSPEL: MATTHEW 14:14-22

(JESUS MULTIPLIES THE LOAVES)

TONE 7 ☩ MATINS GOSPEL: 8

mally order a large quantity to get the best price. The supply usually lasts us 3-4 years. The total cost is \$1,200, (that's 2,000 bottles at 60¢/each). Also, if you have any empty Holy Water bottles, please bring them back to the Church. As you can see, the cost savings can be substantial.

PITA & PASTRY CONCESSION AT "START ON THE STREET:" SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 21ST. (Rain Date – Sunday, September 28th). St. Nicholas is returning to this community art festival, held on Park Avenue in Worcester between Pleasant and Highland Streets, which draws over 20,000 attendees each year. Our Church will again be one of the vendors in the Food Court selling pita and pastry. **This is a HUGE undertaking for us**, and requires your **"sweat stewardship"** to realize the fundraising potential of \$5,000. A detailed sign-up

sheet is on the bulletin board for prep on Saturday the 20th as well as throughout the day on Sunday. Pita baking is also underway and help is needed with that part of the effort as well. **The venue is established and presents a great opportunity to showcase our goods to the larger community. The only variable is YOU!** St. Nicholas needs your commitment of time and effort to make this a success! The volunteering schedule needs are on the Bulletin Board. **For more info, speak with Deb Sedares or Chris Toda.**

DATES TO REMEMBER

Aug 1-15 Dormition Fast
Sat, Aug 2 Staff Orthodox Food Pantry 9am-12pm
Thurs, Aug 7 Pita Baking, 9:00 am
Thurs, Aug 14 Dormition Vespers, St Mary 6:30 pm
Fri, Aug 15 Dormition Liturgy, 10:00 am
Sat, Sept 6 Staff Orthodox Food Pantry 9am-12pm
Sun, Sept 21 stART on the Street Festival

34 GOLD STREET, SHREWSBURY, MA 01545-6238 ♦ VOICE: 508.845.0088 ♦ FAX: 508.845.8850

E-MAIL: FRNICK@STNICHOLASCHURCH.ORG ♦ WEB: WWW.STNICHOLASCHURCH.ORG

A Parish of the Romanian Orthodox Archdiocese in the Americas

THE QUARTERLY ISSUE of the Archdiocese's magazine *Credința/The Faith* is available at the candles. Pick up a copy and bring it home with you.

VACATION CHURCH SCHOOL

VACATION CHURCH SCHOOL will be held **August 18-21 at St. George Cathedral, Worcester.** This year, the theme for Vacation Church School will be "Champions & Defenders." Children will learn about the saints and martyrs who preserved our faith and how they can model their own lives after them today. The Flier for more information is available at the Candles. You may also contact Benjamin Daniel at: Benjamin.E.Daniel@gmail.com or 267-294-9793.

HOLY TRINITY NEWS

HOLY TRINITY CELEBRATES ITS 20TH ANNIVERSARY on August 15th. On Wednesday, August 20th at 9:30 am, the Orthodox clergy of our area will concelebrate a Divine Liturgy with Bishop John of the Antiochian Archdiocese at Holy Trinity to mark this milestone. Please plan on attending!

SAVE THE DATE! October 9, 2014. Holy Trinity's 8th **FOOD and WINE FEST** in conjunction with Holy Trinity's 20th Anniversary promises to be a great evening! This year's event will be at St. George Orthodox Cathedral. Look for more details!

Holy Trinity Nursing & Rehabilitation Center & Holy Trinity Hospice are Orthodox Charities and rely on your donations to continue the mission of providing the best care possible.

AUGUST SERVICES

Dormition Fast Period (Aug 1-15)

- ◆ **Supplication Service** to the Theotokos at St. Nick's, Monday, August 4, 6:30 pm
- ◆ **Divine Liturgy** for Transfiguration at Nick's, Wednesday, August 6, 10:00 am
- ◆ **Supplication Service** to the Theotokos at St. Nick's, Friday, August 8, 6:30 pm
- ◆ **Supplication Service** to the Theotokos at St. Nick's, Monday, August 11, 6:30 pm
- ◆ **Dormition Vespers** — St. Mary's, Thursday, August 14, 6:30 pm
- ◆ **Divine Liturgy** at St. Nick's, Friday, August 15, 10:00 am

A PRAYER OF FR. LAURENCE

LET US PRAY TO THE LORD,

O MAKER AND CREATOR OF THE DAWN AND ALL ITS GLORY, who are the source of all beauty whether of matter or of spirit: As we celebrate the transfiguration of your only Son, we beseech you: Let the light of day be a sign for us of your divine light. Drive all darkness from our lives, grant the light and joy of truth to your servants at all times, and create habits of virtue in each of us. Strengthen us for our work, and enable us to grow in wisdom and understanding as we ponder the meaning of the mystery we celebrate during these days.

For you deserve all glory, honor, and worship, Father, Son and Holy Spirit: now and forever, and unto ages of ages, amen.

NAMEDAYS

August 6

The Holy Transfiguration of the Savior

S. Richard Seferi

August 8

The Holy New Martyr Triandaphyllos

Rose Armida Salerno

August 15

The Falling Asleep of the Most Holy Theotokos

Maria Blanchard

Mary Cocaine

Maria Dumitriu

Monika Maria Durmillari

Maria Kalpidou

Fr. Peter Mentis

Maria Prelipcean

Nancy Maria Tsongalis

Mary Tsoules

Marietta Zaruha

August 26

The Holy Martyrs Adrian and Natalia at Nicomedia

Natalia Grace Dorogi

Natalia Dimitra Karadimitriou

Natasha Zhaka

August 29

St. Theodora of Thessalonika

Gina Theodora Trakadas

August 30

St. Alexander, Patriarch of Constantinople

Alexander Charalambides

Emilia Alexandra Galeriu

Dr. Alexander Gouvelis

Alexandra Mazanitis

Alexandru Nace

Conner Alexander Polymeros

Alexanna Soter

Alexander James Trakadas

LISTEN TO THE WEEKLY NATIONAL ORTHODOX RADIO BROADCAST "COME RECEIVE THE LIGHT"

BY WEB OR PODCAST: WWW.RECEIVE.ORG

WHICH TRANSFIGURATION?

AUGUST SIXTH is a remarkable day in human history. It is the day on the Christian calendar when we remember the Transfiguration of our Lord and God and Savior Jesus Christ. You will remember that Christ, pre-figuring His Resurrection, took three disciples, Peter, James, and John, and ascended up Mount Tabor. There the Savior was transfigured, covered with light. The disciples cast themselves to the ground, unable to gaze upon the brightness of His garment. Moses and Elijah appeared and talked with Him about His upcoming Crucifixion and Resurrection. They were all engulfed in an ethereal cloud. And a voice came from the Father testifying to His Son. It was a tremendous sight.

August 6th is also another anniversary. It is the day on which the first atomic bomb was dropped on Hiroshima in 1945. A transfiguration in its own right. The light was so bright that no one could gaze upon it. But there were no prophets speaking with the God-man. No voice from the Father. No ethereal cloud. (The mushroom cloud that engulfed Hiroshima was far from ethereal.) And, no gentle Christ lifting His disciples from the ground after the vision. Only death and destruction as far as the eye could see. Only a poison which continues to mutate living things until this day. Indeed both were transfigurations: the first was from God, the other was from man. Each gives us an indication as to the consequences of our choices.

In some ways these two transfigurations represent two different world views. There is the world view of faith, which is essentially God-centered. It looks at humanity and all of creation as God's handiwork. In this world view everything comes from God and leads back to Him.

Then there is the scientific/technological world-view which is — as it is often presented to us today — basically



THE TRANSFIGURATION

human-centered. The scientist dissects and reassembles according to his or her design. There is little if no place for wonder or mystery. More importantly, there is no limit, no bounds beyond which the scientist will not travel. Clearly I've given an extreme presentation of the positions, but it can be helpful to look at the naked argument. It helps us see the trajectory, the direction, of our choices, even if we choose not to follow them to their logical end.

It's also important to point out that there need not be a conflict between faith and science. Many scientist and theologians are working hard to bridge the apparent divide. Many scientist are faithful people. There are notable theologians who are also scientists. The God who created us also created our mind and our logical faculties. In exploring and adapting our environment, we glorify Him, we are co-creators with God. It is an aspect of God's image in us, but we need to be careful.

A temptation to which we can succumb is to be mesmerized by the science. One aspect of our fallen nature is that we become interested in glorifying ourselves, and use the wonders of science and technology to this end. How many times have we heard described the things we build, the places we explore, the resources we exploit, as testimonies of 'human ingenuity,' 'human creativity,' and 'human resourcefulness'? Where is the corrective? Is there a place for us to understand that our human endeavor might be part of God's plan, or might even be opposed to it?

St. Maximos the Confessor says, "The passion of pride arises from two kinds of ignorance, and when these two kinds of ignorance unite together, they form a single confused state of mind. For a man is proud only if he is ignorant both of divine help and of human weakness. Therefore pride is a lack of knowledge both in the divine and in the human spheres. For the denial of two true premises results in a single false affirmation." His point is that when we ignore our own stupidity and obstinance, as well as the relationship to which God calls us, we are in serious trouble. And, while this observation of St. Maximos is certainly applicable to almost every aspect of human life, it has a special significance in this context.

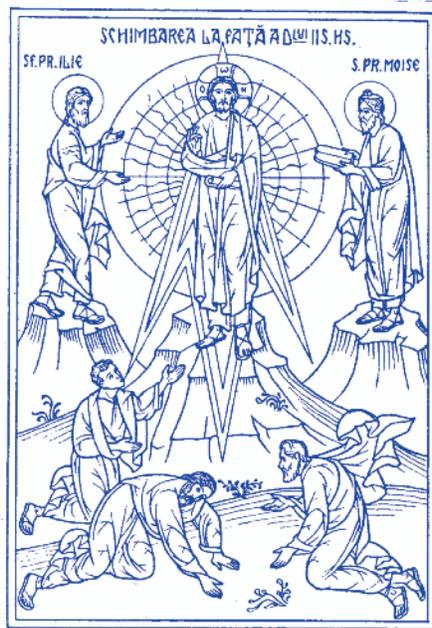
As our technological capabilities expand at a rate almost totally incomprehensible to the human mind, there is no evidence yet that we, as a society, are aware of or are taking into consideration either divine help or human weakness. Rather we continue to view ourselves as essentially limitless. What was the reaction to the horror of Hiroshima and Nagasaki? Was it repentance and a turning away from the evil we had created? No! Ashamed by our deed we sought to delude ourselves by creating the 'atoms for peace' program. By building nuclear power plants, and other 'peaceful' uses for the atom, we thought we could cover

our nakedness like Adam and Eve in the Garden. But as we have come to find out, this solution has turned out to be as great a monster as atomic weapons.

“Today,” cries one of the hymns of the Transfiguration, “Christ on Mount Tabor has changed the darkened nature of Adam, and filling it with brightness He has made it godlike.” The true Transfiguration is the transfiguration of our nature. It is a change from what we were, to what we are, into what we can become — in Christ. It is an internal transformation. Another hymn says: “Shining forth with the light of the virtues, let us set foot on the holy mountain that we may gaze upon the divine Transfiguration of the Lord.” The light of the Transfiguration is an internal light. Its source is the virtuous life which reflects the divine light. Christ possesses this light by nature; we have the ability to possess it by grace — that is, by how much we reflect Him. It is about living as God lives.

We have greater power available to us than the split atom. We have the power to be gods. But we usually choose to be like Adam and Eve. We want to possess this power on our own. We act irresponsibly. We want to be something we are not. St. Maximos says: “Self-esteem is the replacing of a purpose which accords with God by another purpose which is contrary to the divine. For a man full of self-esteem pursues virtue not for God’s glory but for his own.” How often do we hear “self-esteem” being touted as the antidote to our insecurities and our doubts? Adam and Eve were full of “self-esteem” as they challenged God. And so are we as we continually challenge God by the arrogance of our technology.

“But surely,” (you say to yourselves), “God created us with the intelligence to do these things!” God also created us with the intelligence not to do some things. We have freedom to do anything. God has given us this. We have



freedom even to destroy ourselves. Yet, no one would assert that this was within God’s plan for us. The nature and shape of the freedom God has given us is that He wants us to be like Him, but only if it’s founded our own free will, our own free choice. He will not stop us even when we choose badly.

The enormous complexities of this subject can not be fully pursued in this short reflection. However, there is one thing I would like for you to reflect on. The nuclear issue, environment pollution, genetic research, global warming, and so many other problems arising from modern scientific and technological advances cannot, in the final analysis, be left to the scientists, technicians, or politicians alone to decide. They are deeply spiritual issues and can only be understood in communion with the living God. It is through communion with Him that we will be able to find the answers.

Three Mile Island (1979) sits as a heap of radioactive poison which our technology is incapable of rectifying. Chernobyl (1986) remains a no-man’s zone of radioactive wasteland. No one knows how we will deal with the Japanese nuclear catastrophe (2011). We search in vain for a home for our nu-

clear waste because no one wants it in their backyard.

How can one begin to number other environmental disasters? Think of the chemical/oil disasters beginning with the famous Love Canal (1976) evacuation, to the Exxon Valdez (1986) oil spill, to the Deepwater Horizon (2010) oil breach. Nor should we forget the close-to-home catastrophe of General Electric’s pollution of the Housatonic River, and the next-to impossibility of correcting it. Global environmental disruptions threaten us in a myriad of ways: super storms, record droughts, sea level rises flooding our cities and covering islands, and more. These and more are evidences of our arrogance before God that threaten to destroy us. More tragically, these will affect and effect our grandchildren when we are all long dead.

And yet, these sign-posts that could lead us back to repentance go unheeded. Moreover, there are people who arrogantly deny the evidence of both science and their own eyes.

The choice before us is clear. Either we choose the uncreated light of the Transfiguration available to us through our faith in Jesus Christ our Savior, or we choose the created light of our atomic bombs. Both alter nature irrevocably. One, in accordance with God’s will, leading us to the goodness God intends. The other springing from the self-delusion of our pride leading to suicide.

“Come, let us ascend into the mountain of the Lord,” sings a hymn of the Transfiguration, “even to the house of our God, and behold the glory of His Transfiguration, glory as of the Only-begotten of the Father. Let us receive light from His Light, and with uplifted spirits let us forever sing the praises of the con-substantial Trinity.”

FR. NICHOLAS APOSTOLA